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REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the interview of September 30, 2003.

Support for the amendments include page 6 of the Specification at lines 8-16 and page 7, lines 22-25.

Applicant respectfully contends that this amendment should be entered as the amount of work required to respond to this amendment is not burdensome. Applicant has narrowed the independent claims by requiring the greeting/message to be recorded in the voice of the servicing agent. This limitation will not require further searching as the generic claim has previously been searched not once but twice in light of the RCE that was filed. If locatable prior art exists that teaches the playing of a personal greeting during call classification, it would have been discovered in the prior searches.

The Examiner rejects Claims 1-2, 4-12, and 14-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Peltz (U.S. 6,546,097).

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections. Peltz fails to teach or suggest at least the following italicized language in Claims 1, 8, and 15:

> 1.   A method for use in managing outgoing calls in a call center, comprising:
> initiating a call to a first party from the call center via a communication medium;
> monitoring said communication medium for signals received from a location associated with said first party after said step of initiating a call, wherein the call is to be serviced by a first agent of the call center if the call is answered by the first party;
> detecting an initial audible signal received from the first party location via said communication medium, wherein the initial audible signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered;

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initiating processing of said initial audible signal in a call classifier to determine a characteristic of said audible signal, said step of initiating processing includes initiating processing that will analyze whether said initial audible signal was generated by a live party during the call; and

playing a prerecorded greeting over said communication medium during said call, said prerecorded greeting being played during a time period when said call classifier is processing said initial audible signal, wherein the analysis whether said initial audible signal was generated by a live party is the initial analysis made during the call, *wherein the prerecorded greeting is recorded in the voice of the first agent.*

8.   A method for use in managing an outgoing call comprising the steps of:

placing an outgoing call from a call center to a remote party location over a communication network, wherein the outgoing call is to be handled by a first agent of the call center;

processing an initial signal received from said remote party location during said call to determine a source type of said initial signal, wherein the processed signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered;

playing a prerecorded greeting to said remote party location during said step of processing, wherein said step of playing a prerecorded message includes detecting a period of silence after receipt of said initial signal and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response thereto, wherein the prerecorded greeting is recorded in the voice of the first agent; and

after said prerecorded greeting has ended, establishing a talk path between the first agent and the remote party location when it is determined that said initial signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call, wherein the determination whether the initial signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call is the initial such determination made during the call.

15.   A system for use within a call center, comprising:

a call processing unit operable to place a call to a remote party location via a communication network, wherein a first agent is assigned to service the call if the call is answered by a live party at the remote party location;

a call classifier unit operable to determine when said call is answered, detect an audible signal from the remote party location, and analyze a first detected signal received from said remote party location to determine whether said first detected signal originated from the live party during the call, wherein the first detected signal is the first signal detected by the call classifier unit after said call is answered;

a message playback unit operable to play back a prerecorded message to said remote party location while said call classifier unit is analyzing said first detected signal, wherein the prerecorded message is recorded in the voice of the first agent; and

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> a switch unit operable to establish a talk path between a local agent position and said remote party location when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal originated from the live party during the call, wherein the determination whether the first detected signal is a voice signal that was generated by the live party during the call is the initial such determination made during the call.

As shown by the above claims, the present invention is directed generally to the playing of a message, such as a prerecorded personal greeting, during processing of the initial or first audible signal detected during a call. The prerecorded message is in the voice of the agent assigned to service the outgoing call. Not only does the playing of the greeting during processing reduce the frequency of hang ups by callees but also the use of a prerecorded greeting in the voice of the agent lightens the burden on the agent assigned to handle the call as he/she does not have to repeat the same greeting for every call placed (Specification at page 3, lines 1-6). Playing the message can provide increased agent efficiency as the agent is not required to waste time making appropriate greetings to the called party and can also reduce called party confusion and frustration from the playing of an initial generic greeting recorded in the voice of someone other than the agent followed by a second greeting in the voice of the agent.

Peltz is directed to an automatic call distribution system that includes an automatic call distributor, an answer detector, and an introductory signal generator. The signal generator generates introductory signals to be sent towards a called party while the answer detector employed by the automatic call distribution center is monitoring for the presence of the called party. When a call that is dialed to the called party by the automatic call distribution system is answered by an external telephonic unit of the called party, the automatic call distribution system couples an answer detector to the call. The answer detector of the automatic call distribution system monitors the call for the

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presence of the called party while concomitantly sending a generated and coupled introductory signal

towards the called party to be heard by the called party. The generated introductory signal simulates

background noise. When the called party makes a response, the answer detector then detects the

presence of the called party for the purpose of routing the call.

Peltz teaches away from the present invention's use of a greeting, particularly a greeting in

the voice of the agent who will be servicing the answered call. At col. 4, lines 39-59, Peltz states

as follows:

> The introductory signals that are generated by the introductory signal generator 42
> would preferably be, but need not be, a simulation of room background that is
> commonly heard by a party to a conversation through the other party's telephone.
> The method of signal generation employed by the introductory signal generator 42
> could be accomplished by a pseudo-random noise generator, but it need not be. The
> introductory signal may also be generated through the reproduction or other use of
> any *repeating or continuous* recorded signal on any recording media, such as a tape
> loop or other media. It may be generated through the use of one or more processors.
> The specific signals generated by the introductory signal generator 42 need not be
> identical for each outdialed call. *The more closely the introductory signal simulates*
> *common background noise, the more likely the signal is to succeed in its ability to*
> *keep the called party on the line of his or her external telephonic unit 32.*
> Introductory signals may be sent other than those simulating common background
> noise, but the introductory signal generator 40 will preferably be configured to
> generate an introductory signal which simulates background noise.

(Emphasis supplied.) In contrast, the present invention uses, a typically nonrepeating and

discontinuous, greeting, preferably one in the voice of the servicing agent. Contrary to Pelz'

statement that the more closely the introductory signal simulates common background noise the more

likely the signal is to succeed in keeping the called party on the line, Applicant believes that a

greeting, particularly one in the voice of the servicing agent, has a higher likelihood of keeping the

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called party on the line and offers the further benefit, which can be substantial, of decreasing the amount of time the agent requires to service the call.

Accordingly, the pending claims are allowable.

The dependent claims provide further reasons for allowance.

Applicant has added new claims 26-28, which provide additional bases for allowance.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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